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Contents

— ISLAMIC LAW of Crimes

— God in Islam

Editor :
Nur-ud-Din Muneer
M.A.

EXPONENT OF AHMADIYYA ISLAM AND OF ITS WORLD-WIDE REVIVALISTIC ACTIVITIES

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Vakil-al-Aala and Vakilut Tabshir Tahrik-i-Jadid

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(at present on leave in Europe) shaking hands with the Mayor of Zurich, Dr. Sigmund Vidmer, after presenting to him a copy of German Translation of The Holy Quran. To his left and right are Maulawi Naseem Mahni, Ahmadiyya Missionary Incharge; Switzerland and S. N. Ahmad. The ceremony took place on May 10, in the Mayor's office.

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

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Vol. XV—No. 7

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Editor

NUR-UD-DIN MUNEER M.A.

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Islamic Law of Crimes

Ch. Aziz Ahmad Advocate, Supreme Court

Islamic Law is a magestic edifice. It has been planned by Allah Himself. Its foundation has been deeply laid down in the human heart. Tinkering with it spoils its beauty and makes it look unscientific. The Islamic Law can be divided into two parts. Its fundamental and basic part is enacted in the Holy Quran and Sunnah of the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him). As regards the second part, Allah in his mercy has allowed men in authority, who are pious and learned, to exert their own mental faculties to enact any law according to the needs, necesseties and requirements of the people, provided that it is in line with and according to the spirit and policy of the Divine Law. This is the doctrine of *Ijtehad*.

In view of the above it is not possible to maintain, that any part of the Islamic Law of crimes is either harsh, cruel or useless.

However, it cannot be denied, that several rules of law which are to be found in legal commentaries are out of date and some of them found their way in these books obviously due to the wrong interpretation of the revealed law.

Let us not enter into the controversy whether the wrong interpretation was made to cater to the needs and wishes of any ruler, as is insinuated by some persons, or, it was a case of an honest difference of opinion. Be that as it may, no one is justified in denying the right of

Ijtehad, to a competent scholar, from placing his own interpretation on any verse of the Holy Quran, or, on any Hadith reporting Sunnah, in the light of the uptodate modern knowledge and circumstances.

Punishment for crimes prescribed in the Islamic Law may be divided into the following categories :

1. *Hadood* : (حدود) The punishments which are prescribed in the Holy Quran for Zina, (fornication) Qazaf, (false allegation of Zina) and theft. Jurists maintain, that Hadd can be imposed for drinking (خمر) wine under Sunnah though no such punishment for drinking liquor is prescribed in the Holy Quran, where it is bracketed with gambling.

2. *Qissas* : (قصاص) Law of retaliation for murder and bodily injury caused to a human being.

3. *Tazir* : (تعزیر) Punishment which a sovereign state prescribes for an act which is declared to be a crime in its country.

So far as the punishment for Zina, which is 100 stripes is concerned, it can only be imposed, if it is committed at a place, where the actual act of copulation is seen by at least four adult men. In other words, the punishment for Zina is imopsed when, it is committed more or less in public. No one can suggest that punishment for such a shameless act is cruel or excessive. There is however an exception to the rule. If a husband accuses his wife of adultery, he need not produce four witnesses. If the allegation is denied by the wife then they are made to go through the form of *lian* and their marriage is dissolved.

It may be noted, that fornication is not a cognizable offence under the Islamic law. No one can accuse a person of Zina before a court unless he has himself seen the offensive act. Not only that if he accuses a person of Zina, his allegation must be supported by three other eye-witnesses. If any one out of the eye-witnesses refuses to support the allegation the other three are liable to Hadd of Qazaf, which is 80 stripes. (24-5). (Also see Hedaya, Translation by Hamilton page 193).

In view of the above can any one maintain that punishment of Zina as defined in Islamic law is barberous or cruel. Persons who pose to be more pious than an average person raise objection against the said rule of law on the ground that in view of the standard and type of evidence required it is rather difficult to convict any person of the offence of Zina. This is true and correct. More harm is done in an Islamic Society by floating rumours and making false allegations about sexual dilinquencies, than the rare act itself, which is considered by all

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Muslims heinous sin and is scrupulously avoided on that account. The religious and moral sanction is so effective that the Muslim Society as a a matter of fact is more pious than any other Society.

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As regards the punishment of Qazaf it cannot be considered to be cruel. It is adequate to prevent and refrain a person from assassinating the character and reputation of another person.

As regards the Hadd for theft it should be kept in view that it may be inflicted only when a Muslim state has done its duty to provide for the maintenance of all its citizens and there is no necessity at all for committing theft. For instance, in the case of famine the prescribed punishment for stealing food etc., is suspended. Some jurists maintain that the punishment for amputation of hand is prescribed only for habitual thieves. Under Section 75 of the Penal Code, a person who is guilty of the offence of theft for the second time is liable to imprisonment for life. No one can seriously maintain that to lose one hand is more deterrent or call it cruel, if you like, than to confine, behind the bars, a person for the rest of his life. Late Mr. Saleem, one of our most learned, talented and successful Advocate honestly maintained and vehemently argued in the Supreme Court that in some cases life imprisonment is severer or greater punishment than death sentence itself.

Some of the Muslim jurists seriously maintain that it is for a Muslim state to interpret the arabic phrase of the Holy Quran," فاقطعوا ايديهم which prescribes punishment for theft. The phrase has several and different meanings, the object being to prevent a thief from using his hand for stealing, this can be done by injuring his hand or cutting only his fingers or using any device to prevent him from repeating the offence. Mr Cornelious, ex-Chief Justice of Pakistan, suggested that by resorting to advanced science, a hand of a thief may be separated by surgical operation, but should be preserved and restored after the thief has reformed himself. This opinion of a renowned jurist of Pakistan deserves serious consideration by our Muslim divines.

Qissas : The word implies punishment equal to the crime. Supposing a man is murdered. The murderer can be sentenced to death, but in addition fine, imprisonment or flogging cannot be awarded. It is for this reason, that it is maintained, that Section 544—A of the Criminal

Procedure Code, 1898, is repugnant to the injunctions of Islam, as laid down in the Holy Quran. It may also be noted, that the Government of the country or its courts have no right to grant pardon to a person who has been finally convicted of murder or of causing physical injury to a person. In the case of murder pardon can be granted, if the State and the heirs of the victim agree to do so. If it is a case of homicide not amounting to murder, then the heirs of the victim are free to compound the offence with the culpirt, even after he has been convicted, by a competent court.

Tazir : When an act is neither liable to Hadd or Qissas, but is declared an offence in a country then a suitable punishment can be prescribed by the sovereign State. However, it should be kept in view, that when Hadd can be imposed, no punishment under the theory of Tazir can be inflicted except the one laid down in the revealed law. When for some reason or the other Hadd connot be imposed, then no punishment can be inflicted, which is more, or less severe than the one prescribed by the revealed law.

Theories of Shuba (شبہ) *and Takhfifat* (تخفیفات) Muslim Jurists insist that there are several grounds on account of which infliction of punishment should be avoided by raising doubts in favour of the accused. Some times the benefit of doubt is given to the accused though he may not claim it. (Hedaya Translation by Hamilton page 183) Similarly, sometime the punishment is not inflicted under the doctrine of Takhfifat. This theory is based on the Quranic verses (See 'سود' by Maulana Maudoodi page 201).

An American tourist enquired from late Mirza Bashir Ahmad, M.A. (the scholar, whose knowledge of Hadith and History was profound and deep), the philosophy underlying Islamic punishments. In answer to the question after explaining the definition of theft, in the Islamic law, and the extreme circumstances, in which it is punished by amputation of hand, the scholar observed, "lastly the person who steals but feels ashamed of his foul deed, and repents before he is arrested, will also be spared from the punishment." In support of his opinion he quoted verses from the Holy Quran. (5 : 35 - 40)

From what has foregone about *Zina* it follows that by promulgating the ordinance VII of 1979 by which the offence of Zina has been

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made punishable by Rajam, i.e., stoning to death, the Government has accepted the view of those theologians who believe, that a certain verse of the Holy Quran which was allegedly revealed has been repealed, but its mandate remains. This is rather unfortunate, because the doctrine of *Nasakh*, in the Holy Quran is not now a favourite doctrine with the modern muslim jurists and scholars. In the Holy Quran, offence of 100 stripes is specifically prescribed for Zina. (24 : 2) Punishment prescribed for a bond woman (who then existed) was half of that which is prescribed for a free woman. This conclusively and effectively negatives the theory of Rajam.

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There are several other defects in Ordinance No : VI, VII, X and in the Constitutional (Amendment) Order 1979. Certain provisions of these enactments are against the views of the scholars of the various Muslim Schools of thoughts. The discrimination against the non-muslims offends the basic human rights, which were recognized by all the Constitutions of Pakistan, which were promulgated one after the other. Indeed, I assert that the discrimination, is worst than the discrimination, which is practised in South Africa, under the theory of aparthied. The discrimination is also against the promise, which was held out, to the minorities and all citizens of Pakistan by Quaid-e-Azam, the founder of Pakistan. The new amendments have reduced the non-muslims to the status of second rate citizens. For instance evidence of a non-muslim cannot be accepted against a muslim, under Section 7 of Ordinance No : VI of 1979 though a Muslim is a competent witness against a non-muslim. Similar is the disqualification of a non-muslim under Section 8 of the Ordinance VII of 1979. This is sure to bring bad name to Pakistan.

Let us hope that after the pending election the parliament will repeal the defective provisions and specially those laws which have violated the basic human rights and discriminated against the minorities. Let us hope and pray, that non-muslim countries specially our neighbour Bharat will not make it an excuse to discriminate against its muslim citizens. If however, they follow the example set by Pakistan, it will be difficult for our rulers to blame them, and I wonder, if they will have the cheek to protest against it.

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GOD IN ISLAM

By

Hazrat Mirza Bashir Ahmad M.A.
(May God be pleased with him)

— I —

"GOD IN ISLAM" is the English Version of "ہمارا خدا", in which the author, besides showing the hollowness of Godless philosophies, has given cogent proofs of the existence of God and also described His attributes and characteristics. It is serially being published in the "Tahriki Jadid" for the benefit of its readers English rendering is by Qazi M. Aslam.
(Ed.)

General

For sometime past I had it in mind to prepare a small book on the subject of God, largely for the use of our young friends, near and dear ones, about to assume the responsibilities of life. I thought I should describe briefly and simply some of the major arguments from which it follows that the existence of God is a reality, that He is our Creator and Lord, that to know Him and to have some sort of relation with Him is obligatory on us all. I thought I should describe not only the major proofs, arguments, but also the major attributes and characteristics of God, point to the peculiar meaning and use of each characteristic, and also point out how we can discover this meaning and use. For various reasons, however, I was not able to carry out this wish. Not until now. Now a young friend only a few days ago (and God reward him for this) sent me some questions about God, formulated in his own style and according to his own understanding. Each question awakened my own old desire to try and write something on this subject. The questions which this young friend sent me I regard as a benign stimulus. So I sit down to write. "And there is no power in me save through Allah. In Him do I trust and to Him do I return".

It need not be assumed that I have made any special preparation

for the writing of this book, or that I have made any special discoveries which I wish to communicate. No, it is not like that. What I propose to do is something very simple. It is to report such results of my thinking and reading, as are easy of understanding. I hope I am able to do this in a simple and brief enough manner. May be there are young minds struggling with these questions, who may benefit, and who may acquire stability and equanimity of mind on reading what I have to say. So that some at least of my young readers may come to know the Sovereign and Lord Who loves us more than anyone else can or does, and to know Whom is the end and object of our life.

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Before, however, I begin to write, let me address a prayer to God:

"My Friend, my Master, Thou hast knowledge of all my weaknesses. How little is my knowledge and how inadequate and imperfect my record of life. I pray that Thou givest to me the power and competence to complete this book, in accordance with Thy wishes. Make my words effective, and turn them into instruments only of truth. So that Thy servants benefit from my words, and come to know Thee and fulfil the object of their lives. My God, my Mentor, it is true when I look into my intentions I find them pure and clean. But I know not myself. Only Thou knowest. If, therefore, there is anything lacking in my intentions, any weak thought or undesirable purpose lurking somewhere in my mind, then have mercy on me, my Lord, reform my intentions, and make them pure and clean, so that this book of mine may not miss the blessings due from Thee to those who choose to serve the cause of truth. My weaknesses should not harm the purpose I have in view. My Master, my Sovereign, do as I pray. Amen, the Most Merciful of all the Merciful."

What has Happened to belief in Modern time?

First of all I wish to draw the reader's attention to the most unfortunate, the most grievous state in which men have become involved in the matter of belief in God. There are religions and religions and all religions in some way teach belief in God. All those who belong to the various religions, affirm their belief, excepting a few, very few, who are vocal in their denial. Despite this outward belief, which is almost universal, what we find when we look into people's beliefs

more carefully is that their belief is a matter of custom or tradition. It is not something of their own choosing and which they have deliberately accepted. It is because religious teachings include teachings about God and because religious teachings have passed on from generation to generation over a long time, and because ordinary people think that beliefs handed down by tradition should be respected, so that people may remain integrated and united, outward profession of belief is generally adhered to. Over and above, it is true, the voice of human conscience also raises itself and reminds people that their outward belief in God may be supported by a real and indubitable presence. Therefore superficial belief in God is retained by all communities. This does not mean that they really believe, that God reigns in their minds and hearts as He should. No, it is not like that. The minds of men today are a wilderness, emptied of real belief.

This observation of mine is not directed at any particular group or followers of any particular religious tradition. My observation is general. It applies to the world as a whole, to all peoples and to all religious communities, I can see that Zoroastrians, Buddhists, Hindus, Jews, Christians, Sikhs, Muslims, are all suffering from the effects of this virue of disbelief. It seems to have effected modern man in general. Material things, material values, impress people. The scorching winds which blow about have spared no part of the world in which belief in God could be said to survive as a green and living reality. Readers may ask for proof of what I say. I have proofs which I can present but to those who have any doubts on this point, I want to put only one question : Have you searched out your minds and minds of those around you, and can you then say that you and they really believe in God. Believing is not following a custom or tradition, doing what our parents and grand-parents have done in their time. Believing is something live and real. It is believing like we believe in other things, things the existence of which we doubt not. Do we believe in God like we believe in the sun or the moon or the mountains in the distance or the rivers or the house in which we live? Is it like believing in our relations, our parents, our friends. If belief in God is not like believing in such things and persons, then it is not belief. It is holding something drenched in doubt. It is carrying something dead as though it were living.

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It may be said that I am thinking of belief of the highest level which is attained by very few, a small minority of the most chosen among human beings. No, don't be misled. High level belief is of a very high order. You have no idea of it yet. The level of belief of which I speak is not of this high order. I am speaking of belief which is more or less like belief in other things around us. It is belief of a moderate kind. You need to recall the Hadith according to which the Holy Prophet has said : 'A moderate degree of belief is more difficult to part with than being burnt to ashes by a fire.' However, I am not asking for very much. I am only asking you to ask yourself whether your belief in God is able to influence your life the way it should. Do you find love of God or fear of God's disapproval a serious matter ? Does your belief incline you to a life of virtue, restrain you from a life of vice ? Do you in your daily life rely on God, and not so much on other things ?

To feel drawn towards God now and then, to find God directing you to virtuous activity, to feel that behind and beyond material conditions, there is God the Creator of them all—this is not enough. Moments in which we have experiences of this kind come in the lives of most of us. Such experiences come even to those who lack positive belief and whose belief amounts only to this that they do not *deny* the existence of God. When they come we think of God as our Creator, and the Creator of the world in which we live, One to Whom ultimately we are all accountable. This makes it possible for nearly all of us to feel that we are related to God. Such awareness keeps us away from sin and vice and urges us to do good things. Now and then we may also come to think that material conditions are not the really important. The One real thing is God. He is the One who is really Real and really Reliable. Moments of such awareness come and go. They do not amount to real belief. They carry with them a large amount of doubt and doubt inclines us now to one side and now to the other. Real belief is something live, a conviction ever with us, part of our mind determining at all times. Real belief is part and parcel of our life serving as nourishment for the soul and a light to point to the pitfalls of life, warning us when warning is due and showing the way to virtue and enabling us to see the material thing around us in their true light. Such belief brings us close to God, the Author

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of all conditions, all causes. It is with such belief that we begin to experience God's personal love and begin to fear His personal disapproval.

Can you say honestly that your belief is of this order? If you can't and you certainly can't then you cannot be accounted as believer. True belief has its own quality. It descends from heaven and like a high-powered light illumines the farthest recesses of the heart. When this happens, belief is no longer a construction of the mind, valid only for our passing thought. It is belief in a living God, lending life and activity to all His creation, all-powerful, at the same time all-merciful. His sovereignty is pervasive and over all things, much more patent than the sovereignty of earthly kings.

The truth I am trying to point to is that our time is without real belief in God. Not only ordinary people, the rank and file, but even those who pass as religious scholars and leaders, concerned to promote God-belief in society are devoid of such belief in God. They are either pretenders, deliberately deceiving others, or they are themselves deceived. What their lips proclaim is not in their hearts. Which means the world as a whole is involved in dangerous unbelief, surrounded on all sides by the darkness which unbelief connotes. The darkness is so complete, there is not a feeble flickering light in somewhere in this dark expanse, beckoning people to the true path. This was the time—dense and complete in its darkness—for our Gracious God to disclose Himself again to one of His servants. We can see the signs of His presence light again on a chosen one's heart. My young friends, arise and abase yourselves at the divine doorsteps. I give you the glad tidings that your God saw your condition and ordered a spiritual sun to arise from the Eastern horizon. Let the windows of your hearts open. Let the rays of this spiritual sun enter your hearts, and let the darkness due to doubts and delusions disappear and give place to the light of day.

If God Exists why can't we see him?

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Before I pass on to the subject proper I want to clear up one other point which usually disturbs those who wish to understand this subject. They begin to ask if God exists, why can't we see Him? This question is not new. It has ever been asked by ignorant people. When we turn to the Holy Quran we find that Arab unbelievers had the same difficulty and they asked the Holy Prophet (on whom be peace) questions

similar to this. Thus we read in the Holy Quran:

> "And they say, We will never believe thee until thou causest a spring to gush forth for us from the earth; Or thou hast a garden of date-palms and vines, and causest streams to gush forth in the midst thereof in abundance; Or thou causest the heaven to fall upon us in pieces, as thou claimest, or thou bringest Allah and the angels before us face to face; Or thou hast a house of gold or thou ascendest up into heaven. And we will not believe in thy ascension until thou sendest down to us a book that we can read. Say, Holy is my Lord: I am but a man sent as a messenger." (17 : 91-94)

As far as I am concerned, I really pity those who raise such questions about God. Pity, indeed: When thinking goes wrong it becomes shrouded in layers. Then even patent facts begin to elude us. Perhaps in ancient times there was some excuse for raising questions of this kind. Things are very different today. The human mind has advanced in thinking. To ask for seeing God today can be fit only for children or grown-ups of unsound mind. However, the question is still raised and there must be an answer to it and here is the answer.

Let us remember that there is a large variety of things we know. Every class of objects, every quality has its own special source of knowledge. There are things we come to know through our eyes, things we come to know through our ears, we come to know through our sense of taste, or sense of smell or through our ability to manipulate, or ability to judge by touch. The knowledge we receive through these different sources is of equal certainty. It is not for us to demand that knowledge should come to us through a source chosen by us. If it is colours, then it is our eyes we must use. It is by seeing that we can judge colours. If it is smells, then it is our nose which we must employ. If it is sounds that we must judge, it is our ears we must use. It will be sheer madness if we should try and judge and discriminate smells by our eyes, or judge colours by our nose or judge sounds by manipulating. Those who make demands of this kind will have to be dismissed as insane. Their place is in the mad house, or else they will have the boys of the neighbourhood set on them to make fun of them. It so happens that when people begin to discuss the subject of God, they begin to raise senseless questions, yet pass as decent, reasonable men. Nobody bothers

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to say-Why raise such questions about God, when they make no sense in other fields? But, alas!

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I have been talking only of *sensible* (which can be seen or heard or touched) objects and qualities, states etc., of which we have knowledge we do not owe to any of our senses. It makes no difference to the degree of certainty or conviction about them. We are as certain of their existence as of things we can see, hear or touch. Here is an example. We all know that there is such a thing as magnetic power. How do we know it? Is it by seeing or by hearing or by smelling or by tasting or by touching? No, by none of these methods do we come to know that there is such a thing. But can you deny that there is such a thing? Though magnetic power is not open to view by any of our senses, we can view its effects, its consequences. These effects and consequences produce the same kind of certainty as we have of things we can see or hear or touch. When a piece or iron is brought near a magnetized piece, the latter at once draws the other piece to itself. The exercise can be repeated and from repeated experience we conclude that a magnetized iron comes to have an additional property. This property cannot be observed in the ordinary way but its consequences and its effects leave no doubt that it is there. Not able to observe it in the ordinary way makes no difference to our certainty that it really does exist. Same is true of electric power. We cannot see it but it proclaims its existence by what it does. Put a switch on and the fan in your room begins to move. Obviously, a new power has entered into the fan which was not there a second before. This new power nobody is able to see or hear or smell or taste. Belief in the existence of electric power is a certain belief. The certainty comes not from direct observation but from the effects and consequences which electricity is able to produce. To deny its existence is out of question. It is as certain as the sun or the moon or the hills around or the rivers which flow through our land.

Now take a quality somewhat further removed. It is the quality or emotion of love. Who has seen love or heard it or tasted it or smelt it or touched it but who can deny its existence. I do not know if any of my readers have experienced love with the intensity of great lovers. If there are I should like to ask whether it is not true that the human heart, barely 3 or 4 ounces in weight, when it becomes stimulated by love, becomes for the time being the most powerful and the most important

thing in the world. What is it that a true lover at that time is not ready to do for the sake of the beloved? He will face danger undaunted by mountains of difficulties, by deserts impassable, by woods infested with beasts, by the fiercest fires laid for him, by high seas. He spends sleepless nights and roams about during the day and cries for the beloved. This is love and this is what it can do. Can anyone deny its existence? And who has seen it or heard it, smelt it or tasted it? Similar to love are other emotions or states of the mind, awareness of time, strength of will, disposition to reason, desire of one kind or another, aggressiveness, charity. Deep emotions as states of mind are all valid and real. Yet you never view them by your five senses.

To sum up there are many things in this world of which we have knowledge. They are physical objects or states of the mind. Knowledge of these different things or states comes through media of some kind, seeing, hearing or tasting. There are many things of which we can have no knowledge through our senses. Knowledge of these comes to us through their effects or consequences. Such things or states we come to know, not directly but by inference. Their existence is deduced by reasoning but knowledge when it comes is knowledge, certain and reliable. It is childish to demand that everything that we know should be known through our senses. knowledge has a very wide connotation. It comes to us through a variety of gateways. It becomes knowledge when it fulfils certain rational criteria. If a person to know what things there are, furniture and so on, in a room he can enter the room by a doorway. Must he demand and enter the room from above by opening the roof? Such a demand would be senseless. What is needed is entry into the room. And entry is open through a doorway. The question of opening up the roof for the purpose does not arise. Access to anything given has its own means and the means are settled by the object we propose to know. This is how many people want to treat the question of God. God has His own nature, His character, His attributes. If you want to know God you can not choose your own methods of knowing. To God you will have to submit to methods appropriate to His character. Alas, people do not understand. 'Not many people know how to know God'.

My friends, try and understand. The more subtle a thing is the greater is the care we have to employ in our method of knowing it. What is crude

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is accessible to our senses. What is subtle moves away from our senses. These things we tend not to know directly but indirectly through their consequences and effects and properties. These examples should make it quite clear that we cannot have access to God like we can have access to other things. God is that most subtle being. We cannot see Him by our physical eyes. Therefore to ask for seeing God like we can see a rainbow is the height of senselessness. It is to demand that God should change into something crude so that He becomes accessible to the eye or to any of our other senses. Such a demand is childish. Coming from reasonable adults it becomes something to be ashamed of. My own view is that if we could see God like we see a rainbow or a lightning He is no longer worth believing, no longer an object of faith. If we can see Him he is no longer so subtle. He is infinite and limitless but if we can see Him He is no longer so. Instead He becomes finite and limited. Should God assume a visible shape or size, it is likely that you will begin to deny Him because He has become visible and measurable.

But Holy is God, beautiful and captivating, perfect in His being and perfect in His attributes. His attributes have to be taken together, as a totality, a collectivity. We can then see the attributes of God, standing witness and keeping watch, one over another. You cannot reduce the importance of one attribute, without some other attribute reminding you of your folly. We were only considering the folly of those who object to inaccessibility of God to our vision. At once we discover how untenable this supposed difficulty is. You want to see God? Yet you also think He is limitless, infinite! Then how con you see? A difficulty raised over one attribute is liquidated by the awareness of another atribute. True it is that the beauty of God lies in remaining screened from ordinary view. He must remain subtle. Let Him remain secret, manifesting Himself only now and then. Let Him be subtle, yet strike us as certain and real as anything we know by our senses. This is the point. Woe to us if we do not grasp it.

To be brief, the perfection we attribute to God requires that He should elude our senses, our eyes or our ears. But this should make no difference to the validity of His being and the reality of His existence. Our crude senses are not the only way to knowing God. There are other ways more certain, more unimpeachable. We have illustrated this

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point by reference to the power of magnetism or the power of electricity. Our owareness of time is another example, and awareness of the subtle states of mind are also relevant facts. There are many ways of knowing things, each specific to the thing we know. The way to know God is the way of love, of humility, of submission. Shall we refuse to know God if this is the only way to know Him?

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Why Questions About God

Now let us turn to the subject-matter of this book. The first question that confronts us is why should we have any concern about God? Why ask questions about Him and discuss whether He exists or not? It certainly seems that those who are not convinced that God exists will think it futile to raise question about Him. What does not exist can be forgotten. Why any question? Let us therefore discuss the question, why raise questions about God?

Let us remember that practical decisions in life—should we do this or should we not do this—depend upon two things. Firstly, we try and see whether a thing or an action proposed for our notice or an action suggested to us has any advantage for us, any relevance to our needs? If we can expect some good from the proposed object or activity, we proceed to do something about it. Otherwise we just leave it alone. Secondly, we try and see whether if we omit to take notice of a thing or a proposed activity, it does not entail any danger or loss, in our own terms and in reference to our own needs. If no danger or loss of any kind is implied, then again we leave alone the thing or proposed activity. If some danger or loss is entailed in our omission, then we certainly proceed to take notice of it and do something about it. Therefore, the ordinary rule which we all accept is that if a thing or activity has relevance to our practical needs, it becomes reasonable for us to take notice of it. The same rule will tell us what degree of notice we should take of a given thing. If a thing is of great practical importance, it would become important to the same degree for us to try and take notice of it. The amount of attention we pay to the thing in question will depend upon the degree of its relevance, the consequences of paying attention or not paying attention to it.

Now let us consider this question, why raise questions about God? This question is a practical one. If it can be proved that there is a

God, then do we stand to gain by belief or to loss by unbelief in Him. The answer to this question depends upon what sort of God is presented for our belief. If God presented to us is an indifferent being incapable of help or harm in our practical lives, we can just forget about it. Unless of course we have a great natural curiosity about questions of this kind. Such curiosity is possessed by philosophers and inquiring minds and it does not become them not to ask questions about God. Others can refuse to take interest in questions about such a God. Here is an illustration. A man comes round and claims that he has discovered a new star, so many billion miles away from the earth, not particularly related to our part of the solar system, nor capable of influencing our earth in any way, then it is obvious that most of us will pay no attention to such a man and such a discovery, though there may still be men possessing great curiosity who will pay attention to him and ask him questions about the new star. On the other hand, suppose another man comes round who claims that he has discovered something which has the effect of prolonging man's ordinary span of life and warding off the effects of old age, then if such a man does not seem to us to be a cheat or a charlatan, the expectancy of a span of 100 years or so will make many people interested in the discovery. The discovery is of practical importance and can have much meaning for most of us. Where God is concerned, the talk about God or ordinary discourse about God, arises in three different ways. First of all, the question seems to arise from our own inner nature. Curiosity about God arises from within us. Secondly, our ordinary curiosity about things around us also makes us curious about the nature of ultimate reality, the source of all things. Thirdly, we find religious teachings of various kinds constantly mentioning God and asking us to pay attention to the whole question and make up our mind about it. This being so we have no option left to us but to agree to discuss the question.

First of all, take our own inner nature. I think there can be no two opinions about this. We all have a natural curiosity about things around us. There may be exceptions. Some of us may pass through life without taking any interest in the ultimate nature of things. It is possible that in these exceptional cases education and training have had quite an abnormal influence, so that these men have lost all normal curiosity about what goes on around us. Nearly every man, therefore,

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will agree that every now and then our inner nature raises this question in our mind. Maybe, there is a God, as so many people say, Who has created us and Who looks after the world that He has created. The question raised may go further. If there is a Creator and if we have not come into this world by our own choice and will, then we should expect to find same great purpose underlying our creation. It is possible that this great purpose is of infinite significance to us. I am not discussing here whether this inner nature which raises these questions also returns some answers. This is an interesting matter which we will have occasion to discuss later in the book. For the time being we are concerned only to point out that our inner nature presents these questions to us and keeps reminding us of them in a manner which has a compelling quality. Of course we are free to reject God, after weighing all the considerations for and against His existence. We can come to hold that this universe has come to birth by itself and continues to run itself by its own methods and laws. Whatever our decision, we cannot eny that questions arise within us and they are so compelling that wa do not seem to have the right to ignore them altogether.

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Human understanding and human reason repeat the same story. We may take all the pains we can over understanding and reasoning about God and come to any conclusions about Him, we cannot deny that human understanding and human reason keep presenting these questions to us. The style of our inner nature is somewhat different. It raises questions about God in a general way and we keep revolving these questions in our mind also in a general way. But when human understanding and reason arrive on the scene, questions about God become more definite and determinate and also more detailed. The role of reason therefore is different from the role of our inner voice. Reason is sober and serious and asks us to weigh and consider. It reminds us there may be a God Who may have created us with some great purpose indeed. If we remain indifferent to such a God and to such a purpose, and if we pass from this world without becoming aware either of our God or the purpose for which He has created us, then we are in for irreparable personal loss. The risks involved are enormous. We may make the mistake of thinking that this life is meant only for multiplying the pleasures of life and if this sort of thinking passes on to our children, and then to our children's children, the time is bound to come

when we begin to examine our style of life and our thinking. Our bodies display a wonderful design. Is it all fortuitous, the result of sheer chance? Then there is this wide world in which we live and which it is difficult to attribute to chance. We are bound to think of a supreme Creator Who has created us and our world and He cannot have created all this as a mere sport. We cannot think that such a Creator would create, to please Himself, and having created destroy it with one motion of His hand, and having destroyed it, proceed to create another world again in sport. Why can't we think that human life has a great purpose and that all of us who enjoy the gift of life in this world will one day have to account for our deeds? These are sensible questions which present themselves before us again and again. Are they not questions completely relevant to our situation? You can choose your answers to them. Answering questions is every man's own responsibility and he can do his own thinking before he chooses his answers. All I am concerned to point out is that these questions arise out of one's inner nature and the way they arise demands that we should pay our full and free attention to them.

In one word our own inner nature and our reason force the question on our attention, in a way which it is impossible to disregard. What could be more relevant than to ask whether we have or we do not have a Creator? Or if we have a Creator, what are His characteristics? Or, if He created us, what did He create us for? And if we can determine the object of our creation, how can we achieve that object? These questions are not irrelevant. So who will refuse to discuss them?

The third source or party which forces these questions on our attention is religion, the many religions which flourish in this world. All of them present God as their central idea. According to us all religions in their origin and in their beginning are from God. They are founded on some revelation. Revelation has been transmitted from God to human beings at different times and in different times and in different parts of the world. It is because of their common origin in revelation that different conceptions of God taught by different religions have many common points. They also deal with the subject of God with greater clarity and in greater detail, than does our instinct or reason. What we learn from our inner nature and from our reasoning become illumined by the light of revelation. There is no other difference. Our inner voice and our

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reasoning present God to us as something which has a degree of probability. The style of religious teaching is different. Religious teaching presents God as an authentic reality. It tells us that we have been created for a purpose, a special purpose. Religious teaching may differ from one system to another, but it does not differ on the point that this visible world in which we live, we owe to a Creator and Master Who holds sovereign power over our lives. It is He Who has laid down a purpose for which we should live and it is He Who has laid down the means by which we can achieve that purpose. Religious teaching is also at one in teaching that death is not the end of everything. After death we pass into another life in which man reaps the fruit of his actions in the present life. The unity of religious teachings in this respect is remarkable. It compels us to pay attention to it and requires us to take a decision about it. If what religious teaching teaches is true, then for us to neglect this teaching entails grave consequences. Maybe we run grave risks of loss, of lack of achievement in this very life. If we are indifferent we ruin our owe lives. If, on the other hand, we come to believe that there is a God, to relate ourselves to Whom is of incalculable value to us then we shall have achieved the purpose of our existence. To investigate questions about God, therefore, is of very great importance. No reasonable person will refuse to do so.

I now want to digress a little and give a short description of the Islamic teaching on the subject of God. So my young friends, Islam teaches that there is a God, your Creator and Master who has given you the gift and privilege of life and existence. This privilege lasts as long as our Creator and Master wills. Islam teaches that our God is a Creator, Lord and Sovereign, interested in raising us to our potential height and achievement. Islam also teaches that our God is a God of Grace. He does not want us first to do then deserve. He gifts us with potentialities of various kinds and with the means of turning those potentialities into actual achievements. We do not have to *ask* as He *gives* us these things without our asking. Nor does He require us to work for these gifts. Islam also teaches that God is not only a God of Grace, He is also a God of Mercy. If we exert and do something towards achieving the end of life, our God rewards us manifold. Our meanest efforts find their reward. Islam also teaches that our God is a supreme sovereign Who presides over the Day of Judgment. All our deeds are measured in terms of their merit. We are accountable for them. We deserve to be rewarded

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for good deeds and to be penalised for bad deeds. This promise or warning of accountability is intended to put us on our guard so that we do not forget that we are accountable for everything we do The great day of requital is a certainty. Islam also teaches that our God is a Forgiving God. He does not expose us too much to temptations, forgives much and puts a hood on many of our shortcomings. He saves us from pitfalls. Islam also teaches that our God turns to us with mercy and forgiveness, not once or twice but again and again. If we repent over our sins and show remorse and make ready to change our ways from evil to good and determine to adopt the good way, then our God turns to us with special mercy. Islam also teaches that our God is a God of Power. There is nothing which is outside His competence and His power. It may be ever so difficult and impossible in our view, it is not so for God. Islam also teaches that our God hears our prayers. We cannot cry for His mercy and attention and go unheard. Our God is also an all-knowing God, nothing is outside His knowledge. No thought, no intention expressed or unexpressed is unknown to Him. Islam also teaches that our God is a helping God. In times of need and times of difficulty He is ready to come to our help. Only condition is we should have a sincere attachment to Him. Islam teaches that our God is Eternal and Everlasting. He is not subject to time. Islam also teaches that our God is a beautiful God, full of loveliness and charm ef every kind. He is the One Who invites our love and our affection. It is at His feet that we like to offer our love. Islam teaches that our God is a God of Love and His love is unique. Those who attach themselves to Him, receive His love in abundance. They receive also the joy and security of loyalty which lovers expect from their beloveds. Islam also teaches that our God graces us with His speech, communion in words. Being subtle-true, we cannot see Him but those who love Him receive the sweet gift of His speech. Man's love for God does not go in vain. It has abundant reward. The Holy Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement has well expressed this thought :

Death and dust would have been my end,
but for Thy grace that saved me :
Where my dust would have then been thrown.
nobody knows but Thee.

My dears ! This is the God of Islam. I do not ask you to be-

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lieve in Him at once. All I want is that you should keep a picture of the God of Islam in front of you. God of Islam is One, a Real God, with a profile of perfect attributes. Islam also teaches that you can reach this God, if you only seek Him and make the necessary effort to reach. With such a promise held out to you, will you tarry and drop the search as unnecessary and irrelevant? If you do this, you will prove that you are devoid of normal human curiosity, the wish and capacity to understand things, that you are devoid also of a normal human heart. Your heart is a piece of stone rather than a delicate sensitive instrument.

No, my friends, arise and seek the God of Islam. Seek the spring which is the spring of eternal life. Arise and rush for the treasure which will make you more rich than all the treasures of the world. If you reach this God, I cannot tell what you will have reached. But listen to what the Messiah of Islam has to say on the subject:

Thou hast all the might, all the power,
my God:
To find Thee is to find —
everything I need to find.

Every lover has an idol —
carved after his heart's desire:
My idol is my God —
so He, only He fills my heart.

My life, my peace, my consolation
One called the Lord—
of all peoples, all world.

Himself appeared to me,
with grace abundant:
Praised be He,
who keeps my ill-wishers away!

My soul tied for ever
to my Friend:
He is the Garden—and He
is the home of peace.

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Impossible it is to describe Him—
Dare I even try ?
A river ever-flowing—
of love and only love.

What ? these gifts for me ?
my Lord ?
'Praised be He—
who keeps my ill-wishers away'.

Thy mercy knows no bounds :
Not a moment passes
that it's not with me.

Thy graces, Thy mercies,
I cannot count :
I have not the power—
to thank Thee.

What ? these gifts amazing ?
for me my Guide ?
'Oh praised be He
who keeps my ill-wishers away'.

But if, my friends, you do not succeed in your search, then you may know that your life is running out without an aim. That which comes to be by itself can have no aim. You are condemned to spend your life without an end in view. But by your search for God, even if the search does not succeed, you will have achieved something at least. Something more than complete aimlessness. But my friends, you will not fail to achieve if you really try. Go ahead, therefore, with a heart boiling with desire. You will find success greeting your steps. Again let me quote the Messiah of Islam :

Who ever cried to Thee.
in despair — and then
went away unrequited ?
Who could survive better
than him —
who holds Thee as dear
of all dears ?

(To be continued)

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Khilafat Day - Ahmadiyya Mission, Bo, Sierra Leone

(By Habib Ahmad, M.A.)

In order to celebrate Khilafat Day a meeting was held in the Ahmadiyya Central Mosque, Bo, on 27th May, 1979, after the Maghrib prayers. Maulvi Mubashar Ahmad, Missionary Incharge, Bo, presided. The speakers, Maulvi Mubashar Ahmad, Mr. B.A. Akhtar, Mr. L.R. Mahmood and Mr. Habib Ahmad, explained the importance and significance of the institution of Khilafat in Islam. They told the audience that the stability of the community and progress of Islam was linked with it. Reciting the verse *'Istikhlaf'* they explained that God had promised with the true believers that He would establish Khilafat among them as He established it among the people who were before them, and thereby would strengthen their religion and change their state of fear into that of peace and security. Referring to the period after the demise of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of God on him) they stated that it was a very difficult time for the Muslims. Many of them had turned apostates, some tribes had refused to pay Zakat and some false-prophets had also appeared. At that time the Muslims were in a state of fear and confusion, and were terribly shaken. But because of the blessings of Khilafat Hazrat Abu Bakar overcame all the difficulties and by the help of Allah the state of fear was transformed into peace and security.

They told the audience that, similarly, in 1953 and 1974 the Ahmadiyya community was in grave danger. Through the blessings of Khilafat it came out of it unharmed, and peace and security took the place of fear and consternation. The preaching work of the community was not hindered in the least. They stressed that progress of Islam was linked with Ahmadiyya Khilafat, and advised the community to remain loyal and firmly attached to it. After silent prayers the meeting came to an end. Sweets and refreshments were served to the audience.

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Obituary

Mrs. Nusrat Aqeel M.A., wife of Mr. Anees Ahmad principal Nusrat Secondary School, Banjul died in the night of 12 & 13 June in a delivery operation. Inna Lillahi Wa Inna Ilaihai Rajioon. She was the daughter of Maulawi Muhammad Sadiq, Ahmadiyya Missionary, Indonesia and daughter-in-law of Ch. Zahur Ahmad, Nazir Diwan, Sadar Anjuman Ahmadiyya, Rabwah.

Her husband brought the coffin by air to Rabwah, where she was buried in the Bahishti Maqbara on June 18. After burial, Maulana Nazir Ahmad Mubashir led a silent prayer for her exaltation in paradise.

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